

**REGIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES IN THE CONTEXT OF
CENTRAL ASIAN STATES' COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED
STATES:**

THE CASE OF UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract. The article examines the evolution of Uzbek-American relations, focusing on their collaborative efforts to enhance regional security and stability. The study explores the critical role of Uzbekistan in the security dynamics of Central Asia, emphasizing its strategic pivot towards Western standards in military professionalism and education. Through a blend of content analysis, historical review, and case studies, the article illustrates the multifaceted challenges confronting Central Asian nations, including terrorism, regional conflicts, and international diplomacy. The research highlights the significant impact of Uzbek-American cooperation in addressing these challenges, showcasing the bilateral relationship as a model of strategic collaboration that contributes to the stability and security of the region. This partnership is portrayed as a testament to the shifting paradigms in global politics, where open, constructive international relations and strategic alliances are pivotal in maintaining global peace and stability. By analyzing the shifts in politics, the historical engagements, and the current geopolitical environment, the article provides valuable insights into the importance of Uzbekistan's strategic orientation and its implications for regional and international security frameworks. This comprehensive study underscores the necessity of continued cooperation and strategic partnerships in navigating the complexities of contemporary international relations, especially in strategically sensitive regions like Central Asia.

Keywords: Central Asia, the United States, Uzbekistan, regional security, security challenges, cooperation, geopolitics, bilateral engagement

Main provisions

In the post-Cold War era, the geopolitical landscape of Central Asia has undergone significant transformations, with the region emerging as a pivotal arena for international politics and security dynamics. Among the Central Asian republics, Uzbekistan has played a crucial role in shaping the regional security agenda, particularly in its interactions with global powers such as the United States. This article aims to dissect the multifaceted nature of regional security challenges within Central Asia, emphasizing the strategic partnership between Uzbekistan and the United States as a focal point of analysis.

The problem statement of this research revolves around the complex interplay of geopolitical interests, security concerns, and the pursuit of stability in Central Asia, which have collectively influenced the strategic calculations of both regional states and external powers. The purpose of this article is twofold: to provide a comprehensive understanding of the regional security challenges faced by Central Asian states, and to critically assess the impact of Uzbek-American cooperation in addressing these challenges.

Introduction

Historically, Central Asia has been a battleground for influence among world powers, a legacy that has persisted into the 21st century. The dissolution of the Soviet Union marked a turning point, as newly independent states, including Uzbekistan, navigated the intricacies of sovereignty, security, and international diplomacy. The history of Uzbekistan's foreign policy reflects a strategic balancing act between engaging with major powers and safeguarding its national interests, particularly in the realms of security and economic development.

The evolution of Uzbek-American relations has been emblematic of the broader shifts in Central Asia's geopolitical environment. Initially, the partnership was heavily influenced by the United States' strategic objectives in the region, including counterterrorism efforts and the promotion of stability in the wake of the September 11 attacks. However, over time, the dynamics of this cooperation have evolved, reflecting a more nuanced engagement that considers the complex spectrum of security, economic, and political factors at play.

This article delves into the historical context of Uzbekistan's foreign policy and its implications for regional security, highlighting key moments and decisions that have defined the trajectory of Uzbek-American relations. By examining the strategic motivations, challenges, and outcomes of this bilateral cooperation, the research sheds light on the broader implications for regional security and the role of international partnerships in fostering stability in Central Asia.

In summary, the exploration of regional security challenges in Central Asia, with a particular focus on the case of Uzbekistan, offers valuable insights into the interplay between national interests, regional dynamics, and global strategies. Through a detailed analysis of the historical and contemporary aspects of Uzbek-American cooperation, this article contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in ensuring security and stability in a region that continues to hold significant strategic importance on the global stage.

Description of materials and methods

The research methods employed in this article encompass a rigorous and multifaceted approach, incorporating content analysis, case studies, comparative analysis, and historical methods. This diverse methodology is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamic and evolving political-military relations between Uzbekistan and the United States, drawing on official documents, pivotal moments, strategic engagements, and historical evolution to offer deep insights into their bilateral interactions within the complex geopolitical landscape of Central Asia.

Content analysis was utilized to discern trends in policy and rhetoric, enabling a deep dive into the official narratives and priorities as articulated by both nations. This method helps in identifying shifts in diplomatic tone, priorities, and responses to geopolitical events, offering insights into the evolving nature of Uzbek-American relations.

Case study allowed for an in-depth exploration of pivotal moments or phases within the bilateral relationship. By focusing on specific instances of cooperation or conflict, this method offers a granular view of how both countries navigate their partnership amidst the broader geopolitical landscape, shedding light on the mechanics of international diplomacy.

Comparative analysis provided a framework to distinguish Uzbekistan's diplomatic engagement with the US from its interactions with other global powers. This approach reveals the strategic considerations driving Uzbekistan's foreign policy, highlighting how its relationships are tailored to meet its national interests and how its alliance with the US stands out in the context of its broader international relations.

Historical method was crucial for contextualizing the bilateral relations within a broader temporal framework. Tracing the evolution of these ties from their inception offers a historical perspective on the changing dynamics, challenges, and milestones, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the current state of affairs and potential future directions.

Results

From diplomatic beginnings to strategic partnership

The evolution of political-military relations between Uzbekistan and the United States has been marked by distinct characteristics. In contrast to other Central Asian nations, Uzbekistan has not limited its efforts to maintaining close ties with specific centers of power but has instead sought to broaden the scope of its foreign policy objectives. The uniqueness of Uzbekistan's foreign policy direction is underscored by its deliberate shift away from Russian influence towards a closer alignment with Western interests. Tashkent's foreign policy ambitions are underpinned by several key factors: its significant population size, the existence of large Uzbek diasporas in neighboring countries or the dense settlements of Uzbeks across the region, and the country's strategic central geographical location.

The evolution of the diplomatic and cooperative relationship between the United States and Uzbekistan, particularly in the realm of security, underscores the strategic significance of their partnership since Uzbekistan's independence from the Soviet Union. The trajectory of their relations has been significantly influenced by a series of global and regional security challenges, reflecting the complex dynamics of international security politics. This partnership has evolved through various stages, each marked by distinct security concerns and cooperation efforts that have shaped the bilateral ties and the broader Central Asian security landscape.

The periods of relations between the United States and Uzbekistan can be conditionally divided into the following distinct phases:

- establishment of diplomatic relations and early cooperation (1992-2000),
- post-9/11 security cooperation (2001-2005),
- rapprochement and enhanced strategic partnership (post-2005), and
- contemporary relations and ongoing cooperation (2016-present), each highlighting different facets of the bilateral ties and shifting focuses over time.

The first stage marked the foundation of diplomatic ties with Uzbekistan emerging as a power in Central Asia after Soviet Union dissolution. The period is characterized by the development of security and military-political relations with Western countries, notably the United States, which sought to strengthen its influence in the region. Despite initial U.S. attempts to impose its democracy model, strategic considerations led to a gradual sidelining of human rights issues as Uzbekistan's strategic importance was recognized.

As to the second period that was triggered by the September 11 attacks, this era saw enhanced security cooperation, with Uzbekistan providing critical support for U.S. operations in Afghanistan. The cooperation included significant financial aid from the U.S. to bolster Uzbekistan's military capabilities, underscoring country's pivotal role in the region's security landscape. However, the relationship faced strains due to concerns over human rights and the Uzbek government's reaction to the "color revolutions" in post-Soviet states.

The third stage that followed the Andijan events in 2005 and subsequent cooling of relations with the West, Uzbekistan sought closer ties with Russia and China. Nevertheless, the latter years of this period witnessed a gradual improvement in relations with the West, highlighted by agreements on non-military transit to Afghanistan and military-technical cooperation, showcasing Uzbekistan's strategic maneuvering amid changing geopolitical dynamics.

The current phase is characterized by deepening strategic partnerships, focusing on defense education reforms and military professionalism with Western standards. High-level diplomatic engagements and initiatives such as the Development Strategy for 2017-2021 and military cooperation plans have solidified Uzbekistan's position as a key player in regional stability and security, balancing major power influences while advancing national and regional interests.

Discussion

Establishment of diplomatic relations and early cooperation (1992-2000)

In 1992, the Karimov government took over the command structure, arms, and equipment of the Soviet Union's Turkestan Military District, transforming Uzbekistan into the most heavily armed state in Central Asia in terms of military might. By the mid-1990s, Uzbek leadership began to intensively develop security and military-political relations with Western countries. The United States showed a keen interest in deepening relations with Uzbekistan, as this engagement served to strengthen American influence in Central Asia.

In the initial phase of Uzbek-American relations, up until the mid-1990s, the U.S. sought to impose its model of democracy on Uzbekistan, adopting a stringent policy stance and raising issues related to human rights violations. However, as Uzbekistan's strategic status in the region began to rise, these issues were relegated to secondary importance. This shift was highlighted by the U.S. Secretary of Defense during his visit to Tashkent in April 1995. A meeting between I. Karimov and Bill Clinton in Washington in June 1996 saw Clinton acknowledging Uzbekistan's pivotal role in Central Asia [1, p. 253].

The changing geopolitical landscape in Central Asia, particularly the expansion of American influence, directly challenges Russian interests. Experts argue that the post-Soviet states of Central Asia are of vital importance to Russia. Uzbekistan, in accordance with I. Karimov's "special direction," has distanced itself from Moscow, seeking closer ties with the West. Experts believe that Uzbekistan was primarily interested in approaching the United States. This was reflected in the reduction of bilateral interactions in certain areas between Uzbekistan and Russia. For Uzbekistan, reliance on the U.S. could position it as a strategic counter to other post-Soviet states that maintain a closer orientation towards Russia. For instance, in Tajikistan, Russian influence is linked to the presence of Russian troops along the Tajik-Afghan border [1, p. 256].

In 1997, a joint commission between Uzbekistan and the U.S. was established under the chairmanship of the U.S. Secretary of State and Uzbekistan's Minister of Foreign Affairs. Within its framework, four committees were formed: political, military, trade and investments, energy, and committees for economic reforms and assistance. In 1998, a bilateral cooperation plan in the defense sector was ratified [2, p. 70].

The intricate evolution of Uzbekistan's foreign policy and military strategy, particularly its pivot towards Western alliances and specifically the United States, underscores a deliberate strategic recalibration in the post-Soviet landscape. This shift not only reflects Uzbekistan's ambition to assert its sovereignty and regional leadership but also highlights the fluid nature of geopolitical alliances in Central Asia. The establishment of the joint commission and the subsequent bilateral agreements in defense and other sectors between Uzbekistan and the U.S. reveal a nuanced approach to diplomacy, where Uzbekistan skillfully balances its historical ties with Russia against its aspirations for enhanced security and economic development through Western partnerships. This strategic maneuvering by Uzbekistan, amidst the overarching American and Russian interests in Central Asia, exemplifies the country's proactive engagement in shaping its external relations to bolster its national interests and security imperatives in a rapidly changing global order.

Post-9/11 security cooperation (2001-2005)

In the mid-2000s, Uzbekistan's foreign policy direction began to shift. The primary catalyst for this change in the foreign policy stance of Uzbekistan's leadership was the series of "color revolutions" that occurred in several post-Soviet states. These events raised doubts in Tashkent about the United States' commitment to ensuring Uzbekistan's security and stability. The Uzbek leadership restricted the activities of several American non-governmental organizations within the country, and in December 2003, Uzbekistan proposed a new agreement for the paid use of the military base in Khanabad to the US. In April 2005, Tashkent announced its withdrawal from the GUAM organization [3, p. 204].

The events of September 11, 2001, further invigorated American-Uzbek relations. As an initial step, Uzbekistan offered its assistance for operations in Afghanistan. In October 2001, an American-Uzbek agreement was signed, granting

the right to use the Khanabad air base and the country's airspace. The air base accommodated 1-1.5 thousand American soldiers [4, p. 107]. The establishment of the air base, according to the agreement signed with Uzbekistan on October 7, 2001, included 10 "Black Hawk" helicopters, 30 F-16s, a KC-135 Stratotanker, a C-130 military transport aircraft, and about one and a half thousand soldiers [5, p. 73].

The US also provided financial assistance to Uzbekistan for counterterrorism efforts. With the aim of delivering an immediate blow to terrorism, the US Congress allocated \$25 million in 2001 to enhance Uzbekistan's military capabilities. Later, in January 2002, the US allocated an additional \$100 million to Uzbekistan for counterterrorism efforts and committed to providing \$160 million by the end of 2002 [6]. Such financial aid facilitated significant improvements in the capabilities of Uzbekistan's armed forces.

These steps by both the Uzbek and American sides further strengthened Uzbekistan's status as a key partner of the US in Central Asia. Uzbekistan's status as a priority state for the US was formalized during President Islam Karimov's visit to the US in March 2002, through the signing of a declaration on strategic partnership and cooperation.

Following the events of September 11, the US adjusted its geostrategy, which also affected its stance towards the post-Soviet Central Asian countries. The relationship between the US and Uzbekistan acquired a special character, with Uzbekistan subsequently assuming a primary partnership role in the region for the US.

A critical task in preparing operations in Afghanistan was to ensure support from the post-Soviet Central Asian countries for the anti-terrorist coalition's actions. Different levels of activity were demonstrated by the countries in the region, with Uzbekistan initially providing substantial support. This was explained by the Uzbek leaders' interest in the conflict's outcome, as both the Taliban and Al-Qaeda had provided comprehensive support to the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), an adversary of the Karimov regime. Addressing the most severe manifestations of religious extremism became a foundation for cooperation between Tashkent and Washington. The IMU, unable to defeat Tashkent in combat, faced a much stronger opponent as a result of the formation of the anti-terrorist coalition [3, p. 253].

American researcher Peter K. Forster draws parallels between the US policy in Uzbekistan and its policy in Iran during the 1950s. He suggests that Americans prioritized their interests in Uzbekistan mainly in connection with Afghanistan and terrorism issues, while turning a blind eye to values propagated by the US, such as democratization and liberalization. Before the events of September 11, the US had raised issues of human rights within the state. According to the US State Department's report on human rights in February 2001, the situation concerning human rights in Uzbekistan continued to deteriorate. This report in October 2001 designated Uzbekistan as a country of concern in the field of human rights. In spring 2002, during his visit to Central Asia, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld highly praised the region's countries' cooperation with NATO's "Partnership for Peace" program and did not mention the situation of human rights in these states [6].

The period under review illustrates a strategic pivot in Uzbekistan's foreign policy, influenced significantly by the post-9/11 global security environment and the color revolutions in the post-Soviet space. This period was marked by a complex interplay of geopolitical interests, with Uzbekistan navigating its position between traditional ties and new strategic partnerships. The cooperation between Uzbekistan and the United States during this time not only underscores the pragmatic dimensions of Uzbekistan's foreign policy but also highlights the broader strategic recalibrations in the region.

Rapprochement and enhanced strategic partnership (post-2005)

In 2004, Uzbek leadership pivoted towards fostering closer ties with Russia and China. A strategic partnership agreement between Russia and Uzbekistan was signed in June 2004, addressing mutual utilization of military infrastructure. This shift in Uzbekistan's foreign policy direction was precipitated by the 2005 Andijan events and the reactions from the U.S. and the EU, which did not recognize the Uzbek government's narrative of the incidents. Conversely, Russia and China extended their support to Uzbekistan. On June 29, 2005, the Uzbek government demanded the closure of the American military base within 180 days, leading to the shutdown of American NGOs and companies, as well as the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Khanabad [3, p. 205].

During these years, Uzbekistan and Russia began to re-engage, marking a noticeable change in Uzbek-Russian relations. In September 2005, joint Uzbek-Russian military exercises were conducted in Uzbekistan, and in November of the same year, Russia and Uzbekistan signed an Alliance Relations Agreement. According to this document, an act of aggression against one party is considered an act of aggression against both. Russia also had an interest in fostering positive relations with Uzbekistan for several reasons. Firstly, despite low economic development levels, Central Asia has significant social potential. Secondly, Uzbekistan has conducted its foreign policy more independently compared to other Central Asian states. Thirdly, it represents a strategic geostrategic entity for Russia. Fourthly, there was a clear emerging need for effective economic investment in Uzbekistan.

In January 2006, Uzbekistan joined the Eurasian Economic Community, and in June 2006, it re-entered the Collective Security Treaty Organization, signaling a strategic balancing act in the region, prompting the U.S. to shift its focus towards Kazakhstan, declaring it a "regional leader" and a "strategic partner" in security and energy projects.

Between the fall of 2005 and spring of 2006, Washington developed the Central Asia strategy, aimed at establishing a new region, termed "Greater Central Asia," by leveraging Afghanistan as a pivotal link between Central and South Asia, and building on American-Indian and American-Pakistani relations. This strategy sought to counter Russian and Chinese projects in the region and enhance the socio-economic development of Central Asia. The intensification of Russian activities in Central Asia (initiatives to establish a Central Asian CSTO Anti-Terrorism Center, financial aid to Bishkek, and military base establishment in southern Kyrgyzstan)

led to an increase in Uzbekistan's engagement with Western countries. The primary reason for the pro-Western orientation of Uzbek policy was Tashkent's hope in the West as the only geopolitical actor capable of counterbalancing Russia's influence in Central Asia.

The period between the end of 2007 and the first half of 2008 witnessed an improvement in American-Uzbek relations. Tashkent entered into an agreement with NATO to facilitate the transit of non-military cargo directed towards Afghanistan, granting American forces the right to use Termez. President I. Karimov participated in the NATO summit in April 2008. Meanwhile, American policymakers began to less frequently demand an international investigation into the Andijan events [4, p. 108]. The political-military and economic rapprochement between the West and Tashkent, along with an intensification of contacts, was evident in the increased frequency of official visits to Uzbekistan by high-ranking officials from the US and the EU.

The Western states' closer engagement with Uzbekistan was motivated by the search for additional regional resources to support military operations in Afghanistan. This context has recently warmed relations between Tashkent and Western countries, especially as Tashkent's relations with Moscow cooled. A testament to this warming relationship is the military-technical cooperation agreement signed between Uzbekistan and the US on August 18, 2009. For European states and the US, Uzbekistan's strategic geographical position and its border infrastructure with Afghanistan are crucial in addressing the situation in Afghanistan [3, p. 211].

Overall, for Western nations, Uzbekistan represents a significant player within the Central Asian region. Given its tensions with Russia and neighboring states, Uzbekistan is likely to continue strengthening its role in the region through further engagement with Western countries. Events in 2009 suggest both parties are seeking avenues to rectify their relations.

In Washington, Uzbekistan is considered a pivotal and influential actor in Central Asia, possessing regional hegemonic ambitions and the ability to counterbalance Moscow more than other states in the region. The presence of large Uzbek diasporas in neighboring countries provides Tashkent with an opportunity to influence the policies of those states. Additionally, Uzbekistan, like Kazakhstan, can sustain itself with food and energy resources. While Kazakhstan borders Russia, Uzbekistan's border with Afghanistan is regarded as a critical factor.

Practically, Uzbekistan was considered a potential key partner for the US. Its territory is connected by road and rail networks accessible to Afghanistan, including a military base previously utilized by Americans. The transportation of numerous NATO and American cargoes through Uzbek territory offers the shortest and most reliable route. However, there remains concern among Americans regarding the unpredictability of the Uzbek leadership's actions. Despite the Russian-Georgian war, Uzbekistan proved it does not fear Russian aggression. This fact draws significant attention from American analysts [3, p. 191].

The Americans have decided to rely on the northern corridor for their Afghan transit (which passes through Russia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan), making Uzbekistan a crucial link in NATO operations.

The warming of relations between Uzbekistan and the United States, which became evident in 2009, continued into 2010. The United States proposed Uzbekistan's participation in programs to support American troops in Afghanistan. Tashkent granted Washington permission to use the Navoi airport for the purpose of supplying its military forces. Tashkent's policy shift towards the West and the United States could potentially reshape the structure of relations in Central Asia, possibly weakening Russian influence and propelling Uzbekistan to a new phase in its quest for regional leadership. However, experts caution against interpreting these developments as a definitive shift in Tashkent's geopolitical direction. At present, such a situation can be considered a strategic move by I. Karimov, as establishing close relations with the EU and the United States currently appears to be highly beneficial.

At the end of January 2010, Uzbek President I. Karimov signed a Cooperation Plan with the United States. The document was based on the results of the first phase of Uzbek-American political consultations. Washington places high hopes on its engagement with Uzbekistan in political, social, economic, and security areas. The initiative to conduct political consultations between the US and Uzbekistan was led by Assistant Secretary of State R. Blake. The security cooperation aspect includes training and retraining Uzbekistan's officer corps in leading U.S. military educational institutions, including within the framework of the International Military Education and Training program.

The parties collaborate on border security and non-proliferation, counter-terrorism efforts, as well as within the frameworks of CWD (Conventional Weapons Destruction) and "Excess Weapons Surrender" programs. In the context of ensuring peace in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and the US exchange information on non-military cargo transit through the Northern Distribution Network, including the implementation of the Hairatan-Mazar-i-Sharif railway construction project. Uzbek companies built 11 bridges along the Mazar-i-Sharif – Kabul route and are completing the construction of a 275-mile high-voltage line designed to transmit 150 MW of electricity from Termez to Kabul [3, p. 193].

By realizing the Trans-Afghan corridor, Uzbekistan gains access to the ports of the Indian Ocean, laying the foundation for closer ties between I. Karimov's government and the B. Obama administration. Additionally, Uzbekistan underscores its role in the peaceful resolution of the situation in Afghanistan. By developing such connections and engaging American representatives in cooperation, Uzbekistan maintains a measured distance in its relations with them.

The period following 2005 witnessed a strategic evolution in Uzbek-American relations, defined by Uzbekistan's shift towards engaging more closely with the West, particularly the United States, amidst changing geopolitical landscapes. The aftermath of the Andijan events catalyzed a reevaluation of Uzbekistan's international alliances, leading to a nuanced foreign policy that sought to balance its relationships between major global powers. The renewal of cooperation with the

West, underscored by agreements on non-military transit to Afghanistan and military-technical collaboration, highlighted Uzbekistan's strategic maneuvering to maximize its geopolitical leverage in Central Asia. This era underscores Uzbekistan's adept navigation of complex international dynamics, positioning it as a crucial player in regional security and a key partner for the United States in addressing Central Asian challenges.

Contemporary relations and ongoing cooperation (2016-present)

Since 2012, with NATO's assistance through the Defense Education Enhancement Program (DEEP), Uzbekistan has embarked on reforming its PME to align with Western standards. This initiative reflects a shift from traditional Soviet pedagogical methods towards interactive learning, critical thinking, and the inclusion of modern military strategy and civil-military relations in its curriculum. The transformation, significantly propelled under President Sh. Mirziyoyev's administration, includes the establishment of the Armed Forces Academy of Uzbekistan as a central institution for PME, showcasing a modern approach to military education in Central Asia. The engagement with NATO and the U.S. in this reform process marks a pivotal phase in U.S.-Uzbekistan military cooperation, highlighting a mutual interest in enhancing Uzbekistan's defense capabilities and professionalizing its military forces. This period denotes a broader collaboration scope, underlining the deepening strategic partnership between the two nations [7].

In 2017, Uzbekistan adopted the Development Strategy for 2017-2021, which prioritized implementing a balanced, mutually beneficial, and constructive foreign policy to strengthen the nation's independence, sovereignty, and create a security, stability, and good-neighborliness belt around Uzbekistan. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasized a commitment to peaceful, open, and pragmatic politics, intending to continue effective cooperation globally [8]. As noted by the Uzbek scholar M. Rakhimov, Uzbekistan deepened relations with key global players, including Russia, China, the US, EU, Japan, South Korea, and India, acknowledging its central geostrategic position in Central Asia – a region of significant interest to leading world powers [9, p. 111].

Despite a complex history with the US, Uzbekistan rejuvenated military cooperation, highlighted by a five-year military cooperation plan signed during Mirziyoyev's 2018 visit to Washington. During this visit President Mirziyoyev visited the Pentagon for discussions with the U.S. defense department delegation. The discussions, led by Defense Secretary James Mattis, focused on the prospects of military-technical cooperation following Uzbekistan's adoption of its Defense Doctrine. Mirziyoyev expressed interest in expanding military-technical cooperation and exchanging defense and security expertise with the United States. Mattis underscored Uzbekistan's geostrategic importance in the region and commended its constructive foreign policy, especially towards neighboring countries. This led to an increase in joint exercises between the two countries in 2019 and 2020, including special forces and pilot training [10]. Uzbekistan's participation in NATO's Partnership for Peace program since 1994 and annual cooperation programs since

1996 reflect a strategic alignment towards American systems and equipment for military procurement, moving away from Russian sources.

Secretary of State M. Pompeo's visit to Tashkent in February 2020, and participation in the C5+1 meeting, reinforced the US support for Central Asian countries' independence and territorial integrity, promoting regional cooperation. Pompeo also announced a new US Central Asia strategy for 2019-2025, focusing on supporting sovereignty, reducing terrorism, stabilizing Afghanistan, promoting rule of law, human rights, and US investment in Central Asia [11].

These initiatives signify a strategic pivot in Uzbekistan's international relations, seeking to balance major power influences while advancing its national interests and regional stability.

Conclusion

The partnership between Uzbekistan and the United States has significantly evolved, marking a pivotal chapter in the security dynamics of Central Asia. This relationship, characterized by strategic cooperation and mutual interests, has emerged as a cornerstone of stability and security in Central Asia. Through initiatives like the Defense Education Enhancement Program (DEEP) and high-level diplomatic engagements, Uzbekistan has demonstrated a commitment to modernizing its military and aligning with Western standards of professional military education, reflecting a broader shift towards open and constructive international relations.

Under President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's leadership, Uzbekistan has embarked on a path of reform and openness, seeking to balance its traditional ties with new strategic partnerships. This approach has not only enhanced its sovereignty and regional influence but also positioned Uzbekistan as a key player in the geopolitical landscape of Central Asia. The strategic recalibration of Uzbekistan's foreign policy, particularly its engagement with the United States, highlights a pragmatic and forward-looking vision aimed at securing national interests and promoting regional stability.

Looking forward, the trajectory of Uzbek-American relations is set to influence the broader regional dynamics significantly. As Uzbekistan continues to navigate its complex geopolitical environment, its strategic partnership with the United States will likely play a pivotal role in shaping the future of Central Asian security and cooperation. This partnership, built on shared interests and mutual respect, stands as a testament to Uzbekistan's evolving foreign policy and its growing significance on the international stage.

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ВЫЗОВЫ РЕГИОНАЛЬНОЙ БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ В КОНТЕКСТЕ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА ГОСУДАРСТВ ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОЙ АЗИИ И США: НА ПРИМЕРЕ УЗБЕКИСТАНА

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Аннотация. Статья посвящена изучению эволюции узбекско-американских отношений, фокусируясь на их совместных усилиях по укреплению региональной безопасности и стабильности. В работе рассматривается ключевая роль Узбекистана в динамике безопасности Центральной Азии, подчеркивая его стратегический поворот к западным стандартам военного образования. В работе использованы методы сочетание методов контент-анализа, исторического обзора и кейс-стади, что позволило рассмотреть многогранность вызовов, с которыми сталкиваются государства Центральной Азии, включая терроризм, региональные конфликты. Исследование выделяет значительное влияние сотрудничества Узбекистана и США в решении этих проблем, рассматривая двусторонние отношения как модель стратегического сотрудничества, способствующего стабильности и безопасности региона. Это партнерство представлено как свидетельство смены парадигм в глобальной политике, где открытые, конструктивные международные отношения и стратегические альянсы имеют решающее значение для поддержания глобального мира и стабильности. Анализируя изменения в политике, исторические взаимодействия и современную геополитическую обстановку, статья предоставляет ценные сведения о значении стратегической ориентации Узбекистана и ее последствиях для региональных и международных рамок безопасности. Это всестороннее исследование подчеркивает необходимость продолжения сотрудничества и стратегических партнерств для поиска решений проблем современных международных отношений, особенно в стратегически важных регионах, таких как Центральная Азия.

Ключевые слова: Центральная Азия, Соединенные Штаты, Узбекистан, региональная безопасность, вызовы безопасности, сотрудничество, геополитика, двустороннее взаимодействие

АЙМАҚТЫҚ ҚАУІПСІЗДІК МӘСЕЛЕЛЕРІ ОРТАЛЫҚ АЗИЯ МЕМЛЕКЕТТЕРІ МЕН АҚШ ӘРІПТЕСТІГІ КОНТЕКСІНДЕ: ӨЗБЕКСТАН КЕЙСІ

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Аңдатпа. Мақалада өзбек-американ қарым-қатынастарының эволюциясы қарастырылып, аймақтық қауіпсіздік пен тұрақтылықты нығайтудағы бірлескен

ынтымақтастығына назар аударылады. Зерттеу Өзбекстанның Орталық Азияның қауіпсіздік динамикасындағы маңызды рөлін зерттеп, оның әскери кәсіпқойлық пен білім берудегі батыстық стандарттарға бағытталған стратегиялық бағытын атап көрсетеді. Контент талдау, тарихи шолу және кейс-стади зерттеу әдістері арқылы мақала Орталық Азия елдерінің алдында тұрған терроризм, аймақтық шиеленістер сияқты көп қырлы қауіптер талданады. Зерттеу өзбек-американ ынтымақтастығының осы қауіптерді шешудегі маңызды әсерін көрсетеді, екіжақты қарым-қатынасты аймақтың тұрақтылығы мен қауіпсіздігіне ықпал ететін стратегиялық ынтымақтастық үлгісі ретінде қарастырады. Бұл серіктестік ашық, сындарлы халықаралық қатынастар мен стратегиялық одақтар жаһандық бейбітшілік пен тұрақтылықты сақтауда шешуші рөл атқаратын жаһандық саясаттағы өзгермелі парадигмалардың куәсі ретінде қарастырылған. Саясаттағы өзгерістерді, тарихи келісімдерді және қазіргі геосаяси ортаны талдай отырып, мақала Өзбекстанның стратегиялық бағдарының маңыздылығы және оның аймақтық және халықаралық қауіпсіздік салаларына салдары туралы құнды түсініктер береді. Бұл жан-жақты зерттеу қазіргі заманғы халықаралық қарым-қатынастардың, әсіресе Орталық Азия сияқты стратегиялық тұрғыдан маңызды аймақтардағы күрделі мәселелерді шешуде үздіксіз ынтымақтастық пен стратегиялық серіктестіктің қажеттілігін көрсетеді.

Тірек сөздер: Орталық Азия, АҚШ, Өзбекстан, аймақтық қауіпсіздік, қауіпсіздік проблемалары, ынтымақтастық, геосаясат, екіжақты ынтымақтастық

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